

NEW GAME PLUS!

~The Struggles of a Popular VRMMO Livestreamer~

- Volume 3 -

LET'S MAKE A CLAN!

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CHAPTER 19

A NEW WAY TO HAVE FUN

The calming sound of a small brook brushed against the ear, The trees rustling in the wind.

As sunlight shone past the leaves and blotched the grassy field, a soft wind blew and brushed against the man's hair.

He was holding on to the hilt of the katana that hung from his waist.

Focusing his weight on the balls of his feet, his heel spread out horizontally.

Lowering his body, he stirred into action.

The man turned the mouth of his saya, and in the moment the katana was drawn, a dazzling light came forth, and the man's figure had vanished.

Flowers began to dance, a number of lights dashed across the grassy land.

To the Right, To the Left.

Every time the man disappeared, the flowers drifted and fluttered into the air. As if being freed from the constraints of gravity, they continued to drift about in the sky.

"..... Fumu"

After that light had run about several times, the man returned to the spot where he began— As if he had firmly grasped that sensation, Edgar returned the katana to its saya.

"If I include an attack skill then I can activate it 4 time..... If I don't include it then 5 times is the limit huh. The next time I level up should I put stats into DEX^[1], or should I put them into Stamina, it's a tough choice"

What Edgar wanted to confirm, was the drawback which he noticed during his PvP

with the Samurai Hunter a few days ago. He wanted to better understand the Stamina consumption from using the Moon Step several times in succession.

If I were to raise my DEX, then not only will the accuracy of my attacks increase, but my movements will become quicker and sharper.

In terms of the usage of Moon Step, DEX is an extremely important stat.

However, if I don't have any Stamina, I won't be able to use Moon Step in rapid succession. Just like with the Lizardmen from a few days ago, if I were to go up against a large number of Mobs then I also have to consider the fact that my Stamina might be depleted in just a few moments.

".....Since I can supplement my DEX with equipment, I guess I should focus on Stamina for now"

Muttering this to himself, Edgar picked up a twig that had fallen by his feet, and he threw it into the air.

Drawing an arc in the sky, the small branch spun as it descended back to the earth.

Edgar immediately extended his hand and reached for the hilt of his katana. With his index finger and thumb pressed hard against the crossguard, It cut loose from the saya. In an instant.

Light ran forth.

The disappearing blade sliced forth as if it was a mirage, and it once again returned to the saya.

The fastest strike, The 【Iai】 Tree's 【Razor Blaze】 , the branch was assaulted by it again and again.

A single branch became 2 branches, and then 3, and 4.

"Fumu"

Finally it fell down to the ground, in Edgar's hands were 9 fragments of a former branch.

A feat which required an astounding level of precision and timing.

Although some of the cuts revealed a margin of error due to his low DEX status, Edgar had displayed an overwhelming level of technique.

However, the expression Edgar wore was not one of satisfaction.

So this is Edgar's limit huh, if it was Aran then he could have cut it into 16 pieces at most.^[2]

As I thought, there is a major need to supplement my DEX.

Around this level wasn't there a belt or something that could increase my DEX.....

"A-Amazing....."

"Hm?"

The pleasant sound of a voice brushed against his ear.

Watching the spectacle from within the shade of a tree was the figure of a person.

A Cleric clad in a white robe; Her name is Suzu.

As if watching a brilliant dance, Suzu let out those words as she watched Edgar transform the branch into tiny fragments within the blink of an eye.

"..... Oh, Suzu-san"

"P-Please excuse me, I didn't mean to spy on you"

"No, it's fine..... I don't really mind"

Being a bit embarrassed that he was seen diligently practicing, Edgar scratched the tip of his nose as he made a somewhat awkward and forced smile.

This beautiful grassy plain was not within a 'Field' in Dragon's Krone.

It was an area you could access through your Home House, a so-called "Training Grounds".

This Training Ground was an Area that resembled your Home House, and although no Players can enter it unless you give them access, you could use Skills and Magic which normally can not be activated in a Home House.

“Edgar-kun, That thing from before..... Was that the Moon Step?”

“Yeah. Earlier when I fought against the Samurai Hunter I ended up running out of Stamina, so I just wanted to check out a couple of things”

There were a variety of functions in this Training Area.

For the purposes of practicing combination moves you could set your Stamina to infinite, and you can create a “Doll” or so-called copy of yourself to practice fighting against. If you allocate Skills for the doll to use, then you could even practice some PvP with this function.

Many players spend several long hours here in this Area, making full use of the Training Ground’s functions. When he is playing as Edgar and Aran, Ran would spend expended periods of time caged up in this training place; perhaps for even longer than he spent going out hunting.

“Wow, so the Moon Step also its weak points”

“There is no technique in this world that doesn’t have its weaknesses. If there was one then the admins would patch it after all”

“I see. I suppose that makes sense”

Although Moon Step is a technique that utilizes several Skills, unlike the Combination attacks that use skills from the same skill tree, the mechanic of “Stamina Reduction for successive activations” did not apply. The Moon Step burns off Stamina like no tomorrow.

That was one of the few weaknesses of the perfect offensive and defensive technique: Moon Step.

“.....Are you not interested about the Moon Step, Suzu-san?”

“Eh?”

“I mean, ‘How do you use it?’, or something like that”

That was something that somewhat perplexed Edgar.

Andou and Yamabuki, and also Megu, although those kind of questions haven't been asked recently, and there hasn't been much opportunity to bring it up like they are right now, but when they first started playing together those type of questions were endlessly thrown Edgar's way.

However, whenever Suzu was with Edgar she had never once asked about that subject.

"Hmm~, I don't know about Megu and the others, but I'm not that great at those kind of complicated things..... Also I'm not a Samurai so there's no need to know it, right?"

"Fumu"

"Oh, but there are a few things I'm curious about, you know? Like, since you are one of Aran's acquaintances, umm-..... What kind of person is Aran-san? stuff like that"

"Eh? That's what you want to ask?"

An unexpected question that came from Suzu's mouth.

Is Suzu-san a bit interested in Aran as well? She never behaved like she was interested in the past, so I thought she was indifferent about him.

"But, it's fine. I'm having lots of fun playing Dragon's Krone with Edgar-kun after all"

".....Eh?"

Continuing on, the words that came from her mouth caused Edgar to instinctively do a double take as he looked at Suzu.

Fun? Playing with ME is?

It can't be.

"Uhhh, by that, what do you mean?"

".....? Ah"

After thinking a while, Suzu finally realized the meaning behind the words she had just said.

As if it had been set ablaze, a bright red color quickly rose up and flushed her entire face.

“I, I didn’t mean it like that! What I meant to say was, Playing with Ran-kun or Megu or Andou-kun, I meant that it’s fun when we all play together, okay!?”

“..... What about Yamabuki?”

“Y-, Yamabuki-kun too”

“Of course him too,” Suzu replied in a panic.

The out-of-place playboy, Yamabuki. I shouldn’t be one to talk, but I pity the guy.

No, who cares about Yamabuki.

More importantly, I was dangerously close to getting the wrong idea about the meaning behind Suzu-san’s words just now.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned so far, it is that Suzu-san doesn’t hate having to talk to me, or doesn’t seem that way.

At the very least it isn’t”In order to participate in the Grand Mission, I’ll put up with having to deal with the gross Edogawa-kun”, and it wasn’t “I, I always wanted to talk with Edogawa-kun”either. It was a very “Neutral” kind of feeling.^[3]

Since I have no idea what she’s thinking, I end up misunderstanding things by accident.

Please spare me from that.

“..... I see. So that’s why, Suzu-san suggested we do that thing huh”

“Suggested? You mean at school? Yup, that’s right”

As he was remembering the past Edgar muttered those words, Suzu answered back with her cheeks still slightly flushed.

“Hey, how about we get going soon? If we don’t get the job done then-”(Suzu)

“.....I guess so”

Edgar scratched his cheek as if it was a bit bothersome, and he opened up the Menu so they could leave the Training Area.

Seeing Edgar that way Suzu also showed a look of worry, so Edgar flashed a smile for her to see.

What Suzu had suggested back at school—

It was... Honestly speaking it was a topic that Edgar was not very enthusiastic about.



“.....Eh? You want to make a clan?”(Ran)

“Yeah. A Clan, that sort of thing..... Wouldn’t that be like we’re on a Team? That’s why I want to make one with everyone”(Suzu)

It was on a rainy afternoon, during lunch break as the cold rain continued to gently poured down.

As the usual members were gathered to discuss their afterschool Dragon’s Krone activities, Suzu suddenly brought up that suggestion.

As Suzu had said, a Clan is somewhat of a “Team”; it was a group of people gathered together with the same purpose in mind.

In Dragon’s Krone, there was a Clan System implemented into it, so Players could freely create Clans as they wished.

“Suzu, that idea sounds awesome! Let’s make a Clan! That way we’d all look like comrades, I’m getting excited just thinking ’bout it!”

Promptly voicing her approval was Megu.

“It sure would. Yamabuki and I only play with Megu and the gang anyways”(Andou)

“Yea, I’m cool with it either way though?”(Yamabuki)

“.....”(Ran)

Giving their endorsement, Andou and Yamabuki each in turn added to the tension

However, among them was one person; only Ran didn’t show any interest.

A Clan in game terms was an”Organization”that you were”Affiliated”with.

Each Clan had a purpose, and if you belonged to such a Clan, then it shows your own approval of that Clan’s objectives. It also acts as a declaration that you will contribute towards that purpose.

In the past, there has only been one time when Ran was part of Clan.

The purpose of the Clan was not for socializing. It was created in order to defeat the most powerful Mobs; A Clan founded on the principle that strength and ability ruled supreme.

This was before Aran had made a name for himself as a popular livestreamer, he entered the clan in order to polish his own techniques. One of the clan rules was that if you couldn’t handle being around another clan member then you should withdraw from the clan immediately.

Once you enter a clan gain a responsibility, one that says you must follow the rules

For Ran who has a strong loner’s spirit, that is something that he wants to avoid the most. Clans were a detestable existence.

“But ‘cha know, there’s one thing first, how do we make a clan anyways?”(Megu)

“If I remember..... I think we need to clear some kind of quest first”(Suzu)

“Hey Ed, do you know?”(Megu)

“.....ッ”(Ran)

Not wanting to be involved, Ran was trying his best to become one with the air.

If there was something they did not know then before consulting the Wiki they should ask the re-starting player who is Ran; the group had grown accustomed to this process.

“.....If you clear a [Delivery Quest], the so-called Clan Quest, then then you should be able to make one”

“Delivery Quest?”

“What’s that?” asked Megu.

“It’s a quest where you deliver specific items to the Hunter’s Guild. You can accept the quest anywhere that there is a Hunter’s Guild, and the rarity of the delivery items shouldn’t be that high either. If the work is split up, then you can finish the quest in a day”

“Wow! If so then it’s perfect for us. We won’t even have to travel far for it”

Clapping her hands together, Megu looked like she was in high spirits.

The Clan Quest is a so-called”Busywork Quest”. It primarily consisted of crafting goods, and the ingredients you had to gather for it were nothing but a hassle to obtain. Busywork quests had no fun in them, and although the majority of players loathe doing them, right now their group seems to feel the opposite and welcome the challenge.

Recently the”Lunch Break Meeting”of Ran and the others had many things on the agenda. From ‘What may have sparked the Samurai Hunting’, to ‘How they are suppose to have fun while waiting for the video uploaded by those colluding players to be deleted’, those type of subjects.

Crescendo has continued to be their base of operations, but considering that Suzu and

Megu were attacked at the "Rabasta Woodlands" that was a bit separated from Crescendo, they haven't been playing in areas too far just in case they need to take shelter in city.

Because of this their actions were restricted. Recently they have taken to enjoying the port city's specialties; they spend most of their playtime lazing around while "Fishing".

"Edogawa, what kind of goods will we have to deliver?"

"It changes every time. Most of the time it's something like weapons or armor. More or less as the Story goes, it is apparently like a form of payment for having the Guild approve the creation of a Hunters Team, something like that"

"I see. So in other words, we accept the quest at the Guild, and then gather the ingredients and craft the items huh. Sounds great"

Having finally found something to do other than fishing, Andou was getting excited. If you are going to craft goods then you are going to need ingredients. Although they can't go too far from Crescendo, they will still be able to do some long-awaited Mob hunting.

"Then, should we all gather at the Hunter's Guild today?"

"Totally! I'm getting real pumped up about this now!"

In response to Suzu's suggestion, Yamabuki's eyes lit up with the same flare they possess when he comes across a girl that suits his fancy.

However, Ran was the only one who seemed indifferent; he continued to emit a melancholic aura.

Up until now Ran had held a principle to never participate in these type of organizations.

However, Ran was tormented by inner conflict.

Everyone seems so enthusiastic, so if I'm the only one to oppose then it would only

ruin the mood. I guess I should help out. I'm a bit happy that I can be in the same clan as Suzu-san, but I can only hope and pray that things won't end up like the last clan I was in, huh.

But still-

"So it's come to this huh, 'a clan'..."

Letting out a sigh, Ran turned his gaze over to the window.

As if reflecting how he felt down inside, the thick clouds blocking out the sky continued to pour down heavy rain.

Footnotes:

1.

TL note: The original word here is [俊敏性]/ “Shunbin-sei”, which means “Resourceful”, “Cunning”, “Swift Judgement”, etc.

I went with DEX since the only direct conversion I could find was “Speed” but I suppose it could be referring to something else like WIS or INT, or even just Speed. If anyone knows for sure/has a better suggestion then please feel free to let me know. Just thought I’d point it out since the original text doesn’t directly say “DEX”.

2.

TL note: So to point out some math, Edgar cut the branch into 9 pieces, meaning that he used Razor Blaze a total of 8 times. In comparison, Aran can cut it into 16 pieces for a total of 15 Razor Blazes, so about twice as many times.

3.

Side Note: Both of these lines “In order to participate in the Grand Mission, I’ll put up with having to deal with the gross Edogawa-kun” and “I, I always wanted to talk with Edogawa-kun” were thought up by Ran in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 20

HARASSMENT

There were 2 reasons as to why Edgar was waiting in the Training Room with Suzu. The first reason is the one he had told Suzu, Edgar wanted to confirm the limits of Moon Step to better decide where to allocate his stats in the future. As for the other reason... It was to somehow get his jittery heart to calm down.

“Edgar-kun, it seems like Megu and the others have started hunting”

“..... Where at?”

“They’re at the coastlands that are pretty close. Apparently they’re aiming to get the ingredients dropped by [Crab Scissors]and [Lizardmen]first”

Crab Scissors were low-level crab type Mobs, and together with Lizardmen they were among the first Mob characters you encounter when you first start hunting.

Of course, it wasn’t just Megu who went out to hunt those Mobs. The Fighter Andou and the Knight Yamabuki also went.

—In other words, right now Edgar and Suzu were alone together in Crescendo, just the two of them.

“Before the ingredients gathering team returns, we have to buy the Recipe and leftover ingredients, right?”

“Y-Yea... You’re right”

Surveying the MAP of Crescendo, Suzu confirmed the plan.

But, Edgar could only give an absent-minded response.

When Edgar heard about the situation from Megu, it was right after he logged in.

And right after that, together with Andou and Yamabuki, she dashed off and immediately departed.

By the time Edgar had logged in, it was before Suzu had arrived. Megu and her group of 3 had already logged in and accepted the Clan Quest from the Hunter's Guild.

The designated goods for this clan quest were the items "Leather Mail" and "Bone Sword", is what Megu told him.

Just like they discussed at school, the ingredients for both of these low-level equipments could easily be purchased from materials stores or they were dropped by the Mobs near Crescendo.

However, there was a slight problem.

The number of "Leather Mail" and "Bone Sword", they needed to have 20 of each. This would require a rather large amount of ingredients.

Therefore, Megu came up with the idea to divide their members into 2 groups and split the work.

Along with Andou and Yamabuki, Megu will be part of the Mob hunting and ingredients gathering team.

And, the two people who logged in late, Edgar and Suzu, will be part of the Recipe and ingredients buying team—

"..... I'm sorry Edgar-kun, you wanted to be a part of the [Ingredients gathering team] right?"

"Eh?"

Dazing off as he looked at the Map, Suzu timidly called out to Edgar.

"Well, Edgar-kun is a vanguard class after all, I'm sure you wanted to hunt Mobs since it's been so long, right?"

"No, it's fine. I'm the one at fault for logging in late after all. Also, I can't just leave Suzu-

san alone and let you go by yourself”

Although the city is a safe area where PK is impossible, with the Samurai Hunters running rampant right now, there’s not telling what might happen.

For instance, if the Samurai Hunters find Suzu-san then they could restlessly stalk her, and she might be subject to various forms of harassment.

And in regards to hunting Mobs, after Suzu-san and the others log out, I can hop on to Aran and do all the hunting I want, so my frustration is at zero.

Although, because of that my lack of sleep is at max.

“Thanks, Edgar-kun”

“..... Well first off, let’s search for the Recipe before we look for ingredients to buy”

Being met with a straightforward smile, Edgar ended up turning his gaze downward.

As I thought, Suzu-san is much tougher opponent than any high-level player.



What was necessary to make “Leather Mail” and “Bone Sword” were 【Pelt Armor Creation Method I】 and 【One-Hand Sword Creation Method I】 respectively. Both of which were part of the “Beginner Craftsman’s Item Production Line”.

Although the items requested of you for the Clan Quest change every time, most of the time they are easily produced items from the Beginner Craftsman Recipes.

“Why do we have to go through the trouble of crafting so many beginner equipment just to create a clan?”, there were many people who raised complaints about this, but this aspect of clan creation has never been changed throughout all the subsequent game updates.

With VRMMOs being a brand new genre, there were certainly those who focused entirely their attention on Mob hunting and PvP combat. However, there are also those drawn to the in-depth crafting system, and the admins kept this quest for those who

spent the time developing their crafting level, for those who wanted to put their skills to practical use.

And in order to cater to those dissenters, and also to appease to those Players who find it bothersome to hunt low-level Mobs and craft goods every time they want to make a clan, you were allowed to sell both the items themselves and the ingredients required for them at the Auction House or your own Social Shop. This led to a large number of transactions conducted primarily by beginner Players and became an important source of income for them. In addition this gave rise to so-called “Crafting Shops” where Players would go through the trouble of searching for ingredients and then crafting the goods for you. Because of this, one could say that the administrators’ decision was the correct one.

“Heya Nii-chan, would ‘ja be making a clan? ? ”

“Eh?”

They were walking along the beach that separated Crescendo from the beautiful ocean.

As Edgar and Suzu were on their way to the Book Shop, the NPC storekeeper at the Book Shop called out to them.

“The fact that we are trying to make a clan, how can you tell?”(Suzu)

“Well, it’s cuz ya know~ Crafting is something ya do by yourself, right? Most of the guys who come by here are all like that. But, there’s 2 of you here..... And yer also a boy and a girl, a nice lookin’ [Couple]. So you ought to be making a clan, right?”

“.....ツ!?”

“Going on a date and makin’ a clan. Must be great huh,” The Book Store owner wore a sly smile. Both Edgar and Suzu both felt an awkward shyness develop between the two.

“W-We are not a Couple or anything like that!”

“Woow, how pure and innocent. Making a clan so that the two of you can spend more time together, it really burns of youth. In the past me and my wife also-”

“Enough with the stories of your past, Can you just hurry up and give us the Recipe?”

As the shopkeeper continued to wear a grin, Edgar promptly cut him off as he was about lose himself in the past.

What do you mean “wife”. Aren’t you an NPC?

What the hell kind of programming were you given?

“You’re really cold-hearted huh, Nii-chan. If you can’t have an open mind then yer girlfriend will end up hating you, ya know?”

“I already said we’re not like that”

“Yea yea, here’ya go. You needed 【Pelt Armor Creation Method I】 and 【One-Hand Sword Creation Method I】 right. For the ingredients you can buy them at the auction or the material shops at the East of the city. Ya can also use the social shops in the plaza too”

“Thanks. Let’s go, Suzu-san”

“O-Okay”

Wanting to get away from the shopkeeper who has no idea what he’s talking about, Edgar snatched up the Recipes and left the store with Suzu as quickly as possible.

“N-Next is the materials shop, right?”(Edgar)

“.....”

As if ashamed, Suzu buried herself deep within her hood.

Perhaps she was feeling embarrassed, Edgar was having a hard time finding the right words to say.

Why does it end up like this. The way everyone acts.

Is it really that weird for Suzu and me to be alone together?

I can't deny it's abnormal though.

“.....I wonder, are there many people like that?”

Still surrounded by an awkward mood, the two were walking down the coastline as they headed to the eastern district of the city.

Carried by the wind, together with the aroma of salt, the sound of Suzu's soft voice reached Edgar's ear.



“Eh?”

“What that shopkeeper-san was talking about before”

“..... Couples and Clans, you mean that?”

“Yeah”

While slightly hanging her head in shame, Suzu replied back.

Due to the nature of virtual reality games, it was much easier to role-play compared to traditional games. And in Dragon’s Krone, there were a few stories of that.

Of course there were those who purposely misrepresented their gender, otherwise known as “Nekama^[1]”, but since the method of communication in this world was by using your real “Voice” instead of word in a chat, those people would instantly be exposed. You could say that cases like this were rare in Dragon’s Krone.

Consequently, just like the book shopkeeper had said, there were many players in Dragon’s Krone who created Clans for purposes unlike those in traditional MMO games.

“It’s true that there are stories like that. How should I say... Apparently there are players that use it as a pick-up line”

“.....?? What do you mean by that?”

“Basically..... umm..... A male player would say to a female player [I want to make a Clan with you]or something like that”

“So you mean..... It’s kind of like, a confession?”

“That’s what I’ve heard”

Somewhat embarrassed, Edgar scratched the tip of his nose as he replied.

Although this is a completely ludicrous conversation that is entirely unrelated to me, apparently there really are female players who fall for that line.

In the past, I remember reading about it in a magazine that was doing a special feature on Dragon’s Krone.

Like in one of those movies, if some handsome character gallantly came to my rescue,

and if he said that line to me after single-handedly defeating all the monsters, then I might just say Okay; a bunch of female players voiced opinions like that.

The super heart pounding suspension bridge effect, having their hearts seized at such a critical moment, it was a rather interesting read.

“I see..... So that’s what it was”(Suzu)

“.....?? Something the matter?”

Just then, Edgar noticed that Suzu’s complexion looked as if several dark shades had fallen over it.

“The truth is, before we started playing with Edgar-kun, there was a really persistent person who kept on insisting [I want to make a clan with you], he kept bothering me with it”

“..... Wha-, are you serious?”

As Suzu uttered those words, Edgar looked back in shock.

What the hell.

No one ever told me this. This is the first I’ve heard of it.

That said, I only started talking to Suzu-san just recently though.

“He was very persistent, so Megu got really mad and said [We’ll never play with you ever again! Stay away from us!]. Megu said she would report him to the administrators for harassment, but I thought going that far would be a bit too much”

“No, Suzu-san, something like that completely falls under acts of harassment. Also, since that guy was so persistent, you should’ve reported him to the admins immediately”

Acts of harassment were on the same level as colluding, they are both things that might cause Dragon’s Krone to be shut down.

In this virtual world where you could create a beautiful avatar for yourself, there are a few people who ride on their high horses while venting their frustrations with the real world.

Hearing stories of those kind of people, it really pisses me off.

“But..... Isn’t that like, him asking me to go out with him?”

“Go out with him? By going out you mean... that person, do you know him in real life?”

“Yeah. Well, rather than knowing him in real life, he goes to our school.....”

And, just as Suzu was about to say that man’s name-

“Hmmm? Is that Suzu-chan?”

Materials stores and Variety stores, a number of different shops lined the city plaza. An unpleasant tone that could strike a nerve, a man’s voice called out from behind Edgar and Suzu.

“Eh, You’re kidding!? Why is h-..... ツ!?”(Suzu)

“Wow, it’s been so long. Have you been doing well? Wait, if we bumped into each other in a place like this, doesn’t that mean we’re just destined for each other? Or perhaps, were you out looking for me?”

Seeing that man, the startled Suzu ducked down and tried to make herself seem small. Short brown hair with a two-block hairstyle^[2], dark tan skin.

Giving off a feeling of deja vu, a laid-back atmosphere enveloped the man with the class “Knight”.

Seeing that player’s name, Edgar suddenly realized.

“Suzu-san, that guy who you said tried to flirt with you..... Is that guy perhaps... This guy?”

“.....Yes. But, why is he here.....”

Grabbing the hem of Edgar's clothes, Suzu looked to Edgar with fear in her eyes.
I see, so this guy is the persistent bastard who's been harassing Suzu-san.

I also know this guy.

He looks the same way he does in the real world, so he did a real world scan of his body like I did huh.

This bastard..... This guy is, he is someone who doesn't lose to Yamabuki in terms of playboy-ness. He is Itou Yoshizumi from the class next door.

Extra Note: I added the description for Ramirez, the LN only character, in the Character's Page for anyone who is interested (she's towards the bottom of the page). Personally I haven't had the time to read the LN so no idea how she plays a part in the story. Chronologically, she doesn't appear until after Vol 4 of the WN so no real need to know yet.

Footnotes:

1.

TL note: As explained in the passage, a Nekama is someone who pretends to be the opposite sex than their real one when playing online.

2.

TL note: From what I gather, a two-block cut is a (korean?) hairstyle where the sides and back of your hair are cut short, while the hair on your crown is left medium to long.

CHAPTER 21

A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN MEN

This Itou Yoshizumi..... He is a man by the name of "Yoshii"^[1] here in Dragon's Krone. Being from the class next door, even the loner Edgar who tries to avoid other people knows about him. A rather famous male student renowned for being quite the "Carefree"^[2] type of guy.

Good at Sports, A Smooth-talker, Life of the Party.

He belonged to the upper caste of the school's hierarchy, popular amongst both boys and girls.

Yoshii had everything Edgar did not; he was the complete opposite of Edgar.

"Every since then you've never talked to me. I was worried about it you know, Suzu-chan"

Making it seem like an overreaction, Yoshii raised his shoulders as he looked at Suzu with a wry smile.

What the hell's he mean by "Suzu-chan".

Don't get overly friendly.

"Ah, did you perhaps take that whole [Let's make a clan] thing seriously? Ha ha ha, that was just a joke, a joke. Suzu-chan is so cute so I just wanted to tease you a bit"

"For being just a joke, it sure doesn't seem that way to me though?"

"..... Hmm?"

As Yoshii let out a cheery laugh, Edgar stepped forward and obstructed his view.

It seems like he never noticed that Edgar was there in the first place, having a guy randomly show up beside Suzu and block his way, Yoshii wore a quizzical expression.

“Huh, and you are?”

“I am Suzu-san’s friend”

“..... “Friend”?”

Hearing those words, Yoshii glanced over at Edgar and ran his gaze over him, as if sizing him up.

And Edgar did the same, he thoroughly scrutinized Yoshii’s appearance.

If I were to guess from his level and equipment, I have a feeling that Yoshii started playing Dragon’s Krone much earlier than Suzu-san and the others. It wouldn’t be strange to see players on his level making their debut at the Metropolis City of Vernewt in the Veroon Grand Duchy Area.

In spite of that, he is here in the beginning town of Crescendo for some reason.

Is the reason why, because of Suzu-san?

““Edgar-kun”?..... Never heard of ya~. You say you’re Suzu-chan’s friend, but does that mean friend in real life?”

“That’s right”

“Are you classmates? I’ve never even seen you before”

Placing his hand on his chin, Yoshii dug through his memory.

Whether it be his own class, or the students in the classes around his, Yoshii pretty much knew everyone. But for some reason he couldn’t recall seeing Edgar’s face before.

Not remembering the loner student from the class next door, it was obviously he wouldn’t know.

“Well, whatevs. And so, you have some business with me?”

“No, nothing in particular. However, I’m in a bit of a hurry to get a job done with Suzu-san you see. So..... We don’t have the time to be messing around”

“..... Hmm, a job huh? Sounds interesting”

Perhaps he couldn't accept the thought of Suzu being together with some unknown man, a slight sign of annoyance showed in Yoshii's expression.

Sensing his change in attitude, Suzu tightly gripped Edgar's clothes as she stood paralyzed.

"Sorry but could you please back off? You're scaring Suzu-san"

"Huh, scaring her? What's the matter, Suzu-chan?"

Hearing that Yoshii looked over the Suzu who was hiding herself behind Edgar.

Is he acting like this on purpose, or is he just an airhead.

Either way, he's a really stubborn guy. From Suzu's standpoint, the situation hadn't escalated so far that they had to report it to the admins, but it's better the strongly tell him to step off.

Hearing Yoshii's verbal advances, Edgar was slowly getting more and more irritated.

But surprisingly, the first one to act was not Edgar, it was Suzu

"..... It's because Yoshii-kun keeps trying make advances on me like this"

"Eh?"

Gathering her resolve, her eyes peered out from the shadow of her hood, and Suzu boldly fired back at Yoshii.

A similar thing had happened before. Just like when she told off those colluding players from the Grand Mission several days ago, although she is normally quiet, Suzu will say what she has to when the time is right. This was an unexpected side of hers.

"I know that Yoshii-kun is from the class next door, and you're probably saying these things because we know each other, but.....I'm sorry, to put it frankly, it is really annoying"

"What do you mean by "it"? You mean when I invited you to make a clan?"

“Yes. I won’t make a clan with Yoshii-kun, and I never will”

“Hmm? Why is that?”

“It’s because I’m going to make a clan with Edgar-kun”

“.....W-What did you say!?”

The carefree expression on Yoshii’s face dramatically changed, as if he had become a completely different person.

And, for some reason, Edgar’s expression was also frozen stiff after hearing that.

Suzu-san, don’t you think you should’ve worded that more carefully.

You meant to say, Edgar-kun”and the others”, right?

If you say it like that, I think Yoshii will likely get the wrong idea.

“.....What is the meaning of this? Why is Suzu-chan going to make a clan with *this* guy?”

“You heard me, Yoshii-kun. It’s exactly what you think it is”

“.....W-Wait a sec, Suzu-san!?”

As Suzu firmly exclaimed such an inconceivable idea, the one who was thrown into discord was Edgar.

By “it’s exactly what you think”, what is that suppose to mean, Suzu-san?

You should tell ME of all people first.

“ha, haha, you ignored all my invitations..... And you’re going to make a clan with this plain-looking guy?”

“That’s exactly right”

“ ヽ!!”

As if he had taken a “Critical Hit”, Yoshii was taken aback as his face looked towards the sky. Hearing Suzu’s words caused his body to stagger, and he could only manage to keep a forced smile on his face.

At school he was outgoing and popular, for Yoshii who had a playboy attitude, those words brought an unthinkable amount of humiliation upon him.

Suzu-chan didn't choose me, but for who knows what reason she chose this mediocre, plain guy instead—

“..... Unbelievable..... Suzu-chan, There's no way I can accept this. Absolutely not!”

“Eeh?”

The easy-going air about him had disappeared, Yoshii was burning up with the fires of jealousy.

And the one to take the brunt of Yoshii's jealous flame, was of course Edgar.

“You there, Edgar-kun”

“W-What”

“How about we have a contest”

“..... What kind of contest?”

Together with a gaze as sharp as a knife, Yoshii fired off those words. In Edgar's mind an unpleasant hunch started to form.

“Of course, Me or You. We'll have a contest to decide which one of us is the man most fit for Suzu-chan”

Yeah... I knew it would come to this.

In response to Yoshii's all too anticipated reaction, Edgar's spirits came crashing down. The optimal way to deal with these troublesome type of guys is to just “Not Participate”.

By using the fact that we are busy and an excuse, we can just leave and report him to the admins for harassment later. Letting the admins take care of this would be for the best, but—

“Hey wai-, Yoshii-kun, what do you mean by “the man most fit”!?”

“Suzu-chan, be quiet. Listen up Edgar-kun. I’m fine with fighting you in PvP, but our levels are too far apart. I don’t have a hobby of bullying those weaker than me”

“Oh, is that so”

For me, I’m also okay with some PvP though.

I rather welcome the idea.

“And that is why, I have a proposal. A *Fair* contest”

“Stop acting noble and just spit it out already”

“.....Hmph. You said that you were on your way to make a clan, right? That’s what the contest will be. 2 hours from now. You have until midnight to establish your clan. If you can do it within the time-limit then you win. If you can’t do it then it’s My win. If you are victorious, then how about I obediently resign to you. But if I am victorious..... Then I’ll have Suzu-chan join My clan instead”

“.....ツ!?”

The hell? How is that even a contest.

Upon hearing Yoshii’s proposal Edgar grew even more apathetic.

We’ve already accepted the Clan Quest, and we also now what items we have to make.

We even bought the Recipes already.

No matter how you think about it, at most it would take us only 1 hour to clear the quest.

But, something seems fishy.

If he is challenging me to this kind of contest, then Yoshii must have some way of winning.

“The odds are in your favor, but maybe that’s making you have cold feet?”

Although Yoshii wore a smug grin on his face, Edgar continued to calmly analyze the situation.

Yoshii probably thinks that I am without a doubt a beginner player.

Also, he probably thinks that it's only me and Suzu-san making a clan; that there is "only 2 of us".

I see now—

It's true that if there's only 2 of us, then it wouldn't be strange to assume that it would be difficult for us to hunt Mobs and also clear the quest within the time-limit.

Yoshii looks like he's been playing Dragon's Krone for quite a while now, so he probably has a lot of money on him.

If he finds out the required items for the current Clan Quest, then he could go and buy out all the ingredients before we get the chance to. So he secretly plans to sabotage us like that huh.

"Edgar-kun"

Suzu apologetically whispered into Edgar's ear.

"..... I'm sorry. Because of me, you-"

"No, it's alright. However, I'll let Suzu-san be the one to decide whether we should accept this contest or not"

"Eh?"

"It's alright if we accept the contest, and I also think it's fine if we ignore it and leave. But you know, I'll say one thing, this might be a really good opportunity"

"Opportunity?"

Hearing Edgar's words, Suzu slightly tilted her head looking puzzled.

“Even if we ignore the challenge and report this to the admins, he still goes to the same school as us. Suzu-san, as long as he knows you in real life, it will be difficult to get Yoshii to give up on this matter. Taking that into consideration, if we accept the challenge he proposed himself and are able to clearly draw the line, then it’s possible to change the current situation for the better”

This guy is the type who cares his own popularity and status.

If you consider that, then even though he always acts aloof and carefree, he won’t go back on his word especially since he suggested it himself.

Because of he did go back on his word, it would cause his reputation at school to crumble.

“That’s true, but.....”

“I’ll definitely win this contest. You don’t have to worry about that”

“Edgar-kun.....”

At Edgar’s clear declaration, Suzu’s chest welled up, and she felt an indescribable feeling of reassurance.

“Okay. Edgar-kun, Thank you”

“Yeah, just leave it to me”

Gently nodding her head, Edgar answered back with a smile.

If it is Edgar-kun then he will definitely come to my rescue.

Just like he did during the Grand Mission—

“Now then, what will you do? Edgar-kun, how about we have a showdown, fair-and-square”

“.....Very well. That contest, I’ll take you on”

Looking straight forward and meeting Yoshii's gaze, Edgar decisively fired back.

"Good. Okay then, you have 2 hours. If you can clear your Clan Quest before then, it's your win. If not, then it is my win"

"Fair enough"

Not even 2 hours, We'll finish this in less than one.

As Yoshii glared back with a sharp scowl, Edgar calmly nodded his head.

—However, so quiet that Edgar and Suzu did not notice, Yoshii smiled as he let out a small chuckle.

Footnotes:

1.

TL note: Yoshizumi's in-game name is Yoshii spelled out in hiragana as “よっしー”. As a side note, I'll add to his character's page in a bit.

2.

TL note: I had quite the hard time trying to figure out the appropriate word to use here. The original word is “お調子者” which would can mean many things such as “a frivolous person”, “someone who gets ahead of themselves/carried away”, in some senses it could mean “extroverted”, etc.

In the end I decided to go with “Carefree/nonchalant/laid-back” here and vary the different uses throughout the chapter.

CHAPTER 22

THE BATTLE FOR SUZU (PART 1)

“Ehh, The hell! Did that [Lan-terd]come back!?”

Carried by the salty breeze, the sound of Megu’s surprised voice echoed throughout the city of Crescendo.

“..... Umm, what is a [Lan-terd]?”

“It’s that Lanky-Bastard who looks like a sissy girl! That jerk, even though I told him to never come near us again”

“Ohh”

So that’s what it means huh.

Watching Megu vexingly grind her molars together, Edgar nodded his head in understanding.

The ingredients gathering team consisting of Megu and Andou, and also Yamabuki, were hunting Mobs by the coastline without running into many problems.

Upon returning to Crescendo to replenishing their supplies, they had heard about the contest with Edgar and each were reacting to it in their own way.

“If this is how things are gonna be then we’d better put our backs into it, or else it could turn out bad. Let’s resupply with items and get right back to hunting, Yamabuki, Megu-san”

“But ‘cha know, that guy’s got a real headstrong attitude, so don’cha think he’d do a bunch of stuff to sabotage us?”

Yamabuki brought up a point in reply to Andou’s words.

Since he possessed the same playboy characteristic, Yamabuki felt that Yoshii from the

class next door was somewhat of a rival of his. Because of that, Yamabuki was pretty familiar with Yoshii's behavior patterns.

"By sabotage..... Do you mean he might try to PK Megu and the others while they are Mob hunting?"

"Nah, I doubt that. That guy, he cares the most about what other people think of him, so he wouldn't do something to lower his image. 'Specially stuff that'll give him a bad rep, like PK"

As Suzu asked a question, Yamabuki gave yet another reply.

That was something that Edgar also understood from his conversation with Yoshii earlier.

If Yoshii was planning on obstructing them, then he wouldn't do it by any direct means. No doubt he would use more roundabout methods.

"In that case..... Ya think he would go to the auction house and material stores, and buy out all the ingredients we can't get from hunting Crab Scissors and Lizardmen?"

"..... I also considered that, but I think that would be difficult"

Megu offered a hypothesis, but Edgar answered in reply.

"Would be difficult? But don't material stores have a daily limit to how much they sell? If they become sold out then won't we hafta wait until it resets at midnight?"

Megu was mainly worried about that point.

For stores operated by NPCs, material stores are the only ones with a daily sales limit imposed on them.

In other words, material stores are the only ones that can be "Sold-Out" of an item.

"Yeah. What you said is true, Megu-san. I think the reason why Yoshii made the time-

limit before midnight was because of that reason”

“Right?”

“However, material stores aren’t the only places that sell ingredients and quest items. They’re also sold at the auction house, and you can even buy them at social shops. It’s completely impossible to buy up everything because of that”

It could be said that the admins set a limit on the goods sold by material stores in order to help out beginner players. Because there was a demand for items that were sold-out at the material stores, it allowed beginner players a way to earn a small bit of income by selling them at auctions and social shops.

A Social Shop: it is a system that allows individuals to set up their own personalized “Street Stalls”.

Unlike using an auction house where you were required to do business while in a city, you could designate your Support NPC to manage your social shop and set up business just about anywhere.

In other words, even in small villages like Myune which did not have an auction house, or in the Field, or even in the deepest parts of a Dungeon, it was possible to sell goods to other players almost anywhere. Buying out all the necessary items and ingredients from those social shops was physically impossible.

“Is it not possible even if Yoshii-kun has a bunch of his friends go around buying everything?”

“It’s still impossible, Suzu-san. Perhaps it would be possible if we’re talking about rare and hard to obtain items, but the materials and equipment we need are things that even beginner players can get their hands on. Even if Yoshii had a bunch of people helping him, the magnitude of players selling what we need at the auction and social shops are just way too large”

Basically, it’s a matter of supply and demand; the supply greatly surpasses the demand for those items.

If Yoshii held a lot of influence in this world, and if he managed to mobilize several hundreds of players together then it might be possible, but it would still require them to have to proper coordination and timing to purchase the goods right when they hit the market.

“..... Hmm~, I kinda get what Ed is saying here. That would mean, should we give up on hunting Mobs and just run around buying stuff instead?”

“No, I think it’s better if we stay split into 2 groups. I think it’s best if we have Edgar and Suzu-san stay as a group and look around the auction house and social shops”

“And if the two of you find any ingredients from Mob drops, then buy them up immediately.

Let’s be on double-standby and hunt as many Mobs as we can and buy as much as possible,” unexpectedly it was Andou who proposed this two-fold plan.

“..... Yeah, I agree with Andou-kun”(Edgar)

“Ooh, yur thinkin’ pretty smart today huh, Andou”(Yamabuki)

“Shaddup dummy, I’m always calm and level-headed”(Andou)

He he he, Andou scratched the tip of his noses in embarrassment.

However, looking at Andou from the side, was Megu’s ice-cold gaze.

“..... Hmm~, who were the idiots who charged in head first during the Grand Mission again?”

“*Gulp*..... that was.....”

“..... *Haa?* You say something? If you have something to say, then how ’bout you say it loud ‘n clear for all of us to listen?”

Saying that, Megu grabbed the now mournful Andou and Yamabuki by the wrist, and said to Suzu and Edgar “If anything happens then be sure to send a message”before

dragging them off.

It appears that she is still holding a deep grudge regarding that incident. A woman's willpower is a terrifying thing.

"How should I say..... Megu, she's like a queen-sama"(Suzu)

"Well, it does kind of suit her... I think"

As if she was a queen being escorted by her manservants, the 2 of them obediently followed Megu, and they disappeared in the direction of the plaza.

Although they were reaping what they sowed, Edgar could not help but feel sympathy for Andou and Yamabuki who had their weakness tightly grasped by Megu. But, as Edgar watched the broken men depart, he dared not speak out.



After separating from Megu and her group, Edgar and Suzu decided to head towards the material stores and the auction house.

They had already purchased the Recipes.

The ingredients needed to craft bone swords were "Crab Claws" and "Animal Hair". Leather mails needed the ingredients "Lizard Skin" and "Leathere Straps".

"Crab Claws" are dropped by Crab Scissors, and "Lizard Skin" is dropped by Lizardmen. In that case, our highest priority should be purchasing "Animal Hair" and "Leather Straps".

Of course, if we come across some "Crab Claws" or "Lizard Skin" then we'll buy what we can.

"The required goods, we need 20 bone swords and 20 leather mails, right?"(Suzu)

"That's right. Those ingredients aren't very expensive, so it should be easy for us to get our hands on them"

In some genres of MMOs, there is the possibility that crafting items might fail, but

Dragon's Krone had no such feature.

Instead of that, there were fluctuations in the weapon's stats. The functionality of the weapon will either increase or decrease depending on your skill level.

Since the crafted goods will be used for a quest, the weapon's stats don't matter at all. Therefore we probably won't have to buy any extra ingredients.

"Welcome"

When Edgar opened the door he was greeted by the kind voice of the store owner.

The first place Edgar and Suzu headed for, was the materials store that was close to the plaza.

Though the store's interior wasn't that large, the shelves were lined with many different ingredients. These ingredients weren't necessarily the ones for sale; they were simply a collection of Objects.

"Excuse me, I would like Animal Hair and Leather Straps, 20 of each please"

When they discussed things with Megu and the others earlier, it was decided that Suzu would handle the money until the end of this quest. Fulfilling her duty as the team's accountant, Suzu began the exchange with the storekeeper.

Incidentally the drop items of "Crab Claws" and "Lizard Skin" were not sold in the materials store. The only place to buy them would be either the auction house or social shops.

"Animal Hair, and Leather Straps. Okay, please wait one moment"

The shopkeeper held up a list in his hand and scrutinized it.

That list contained all the available ingredients in alphabetical order; the shopkeeper slowly ran his finger down it as he searched.

However, after some time, his finger had arrived all the way at the bottom of the list.

“I am sorry. Both ingredients are currently sold out”

“..... As expected, huh”

Edgar’s mumbling could be heard from the side.

Just like Megu-san anticipated, it looks like Yoshii has bought everything.

“Incidentally, do you remember who it was who bought it?”

“The person who bought Animal Hair and Leather Straps? Let’s see... I wonder what kind of person they were.....”

“Well how about, was he a lanky looking guy, someone who looks like he’s just fooling around?”

Supplementing Edgar’s initial question, Suzu promptly chimed in.

However, they were unable to get a direct response.

“Hmm~..... No, I am sorry. There are a lot of different people who come in after all. I can’t seem to remember”

“Is that so.....”

“Young lady, do you really need those ingredients that badly? In that case, I believe we should receive a restock in about an hour.....”

As Suzu became discouraged the storekeeper quickly tried to follow up. Edgar looked towards the clock being displayed into the lower corner of his view.

30 minutes had already passed since we’ve accepted Yoshii’s challenge.

We don’t have the leeway to be wasting time here huh.

“No, it’s fine. Let’s go, Suzu-san”

“Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Shopkeeper”

“Sorry about that. Come by again next time”

Suzu left the materials store with a grave look on her face.

However, Edgar remained collected and did not panic.

“It will be alright, Suzu-san. It was within our expectations that Yoshii would buy out the store”

“..... Yes, you are right”

“If we head to the auction then we should be able to buy everything. You don’t have to worry”

Animal Hair is dropped by Mobs that appear around the Rabasta Woodlands, and we can also make Leather Straps from the Lizard Skins.

It might be difficult for us since we can’t venture too far, but”Crab Claws” and”Lizard Skin”are important sources of income for beginner players like ourselves.

There should be a ton of them on sale, there’s no way they could possibly be sold out.

“..... Okay, but... let’s hurry Edgar-kun. For some reason I have a bad feeling about this”

Suzu wasn’t a complete novice who didn’t know anything about Dragon’s Krone.

Just like Edgar had predicted, she too know that the ingredients they needed were an essential source of income for the players who made Crescendo their home base.

There should be plenty of ingredients on sale because of that.

And yet, Suzu was unable to ease this unknown feeling of dread.

“Yea, you’re right. Let’s hurry”

Edgar nodded in reply.

Together with Suzu who was restless with anxiety, Edgar picked up the pace and hustled towards the Auction House.

CHAPTER 23

THE BATTLE FOR SUZU (PART 2)

The “Auction House” is as the name implies; it is a place for fellow Players to buy and sell merchandise.

Out of the 5 Rarities it was only possible for you to put up goods from the lowest 3 Rarities of “Common” “Uncommon” and “Rare”. Nevertheless, items and ingredients for crafting, numerous weapons and armors, there was still a huge variety of goods for sale.

Even more so since the variety of goods for sale were not confined to what was available at an individual town; at the Auction House you could browse the collections of players all throughout the world.

In other words, for the players in Crescendo, this system allowed them to purchase items from even far off places like Vernewt.

“This is, so many people..... Are all these people here for the Auction?” (Suzu)

When Edgar and Suzu entered the Auction House, they were greeted by the sight of the store’s interior being jam-packed with players. If it was just a normal day, then there should only be a small number of players using the auction, but before the Auction Board was a tremendous amount of players.

At the Auction House there was a so-called Auction Board that displayed several items for sale on it.

If you were within a few meters of this Board, then you could open up the Auction Menu, and browse the current goods and bids.

“You’re right, this is way too many. I’ve never seen this many players gathered here before”

“..... I, I’ll go look for the ingredients”

“Yea”

Unable to brush off her sense of unease, Suzu hastily went over to the Auction Board. Seeing her off as she pushed her way through the crowd of people, Edgar took a good look at the surroundings.

“Now then, what to do...”

It should be fine if I just wait here, but that would be a waste of time.
Also, I can’t help but have a bad feeling about this weird situation.

And thus, being worried about the abnormal circumstances just like Suzu was, Edgar picked up a nearby pamphlet; The “Red Book”.

This “Red Book” was a pamphlet that had the up-to-date market prices for items being sold.

The list had a large number of items being updated in real-time so at times there slight variations, but it was a rather convenient pamphlet that gave you the general range of how much items were selling for; the so-called “Market Price”.

“Let’s see, how much for Lizard Skin.....”

Quickly flipping through the pages, Edgar searched for the ingredients they wanted. Lizard Skin and Crab Claws, and also Animal Hair and Leather Straps—

The Red Book separated items into specific categories, so looking for the items he needed did not take very long.

However—

“..... What’s up with this price”

Edgar was doubtful about the number shown in the Red Book.

The ingredients we need, they are over 10 times more expensive than if we were to buy them at a materials store.

“That’s impossible,” Edgar checked a second time just to be sure, but no matter how many times he looked that number was not mistaken.

Contrary to his expectations, during the time he spent searching, the values would be updated, and the market price would go up even further.

“What..... What is happening?”

If the market price rises, then that means the balance between supply and demand was overturned, and that the supply has become scarce.

But, the items we need are things that anyone can get their hands on.

It’s simply unthinkable that the supply would run out.

“Edgar-kun!”

While Edgar was deep in thought, Suzu’s panicked voice came flying towards him.

“They are sold out!”

“Huh?”

“The Lizard Skin and Crab Claws, even the animal hair and leather straps, none of them are on sale!”

“..... Are you serious!?”

Edgar accidentally let out a cry of astonishment.

No matter what the circumstances, it was impossible for Edgar to believe what he had just heard.

For nothing to be on sale... There’s absolutely no way. Do you realize how much of those ingredients drop around here?

“Are you sure you’re not mistaken?”

“Yes, I’ve double-checked several times already”

Just to be sure, Edgar went over to the Auction Board and opened the list for himself. From the “Skin Ingredients” category, he sorted the listings by name, and quickly searched for Lizard Skins.

The number on sale—— was zero.

“..... You’re kidding me”

“Edgar-kun, take a look at the transaction logs for Lizard Skin”

Having discovered something, Suzu spoke up.

The transaction logs were a history of successful bids for a particular item.

And so, being urged by Suzu, Edgar opened up the transaction log... and what he saw made his expression freeze stiff.

“..... Unbelievable. How come so many players are buying Lizard Skin?”

Recorded in the transaction log, were the names of so many different players that it would be impossible to count.

Looking at the transaction times, the sales started to heat up around 1 hour ago. The final transaction happened 30 minutes earlier.

A colossal magnitude of players were purchasing Lizard Skin, as if they were fighting over it.

And to add to that abnormal scene, was the fact that it was not only Lizard Skin. Crab Claws and Animal Hair, and even Leather Straps were being bought up like crazy.

“It doesn’t look like Yoshii-kun bought them himself, but this is.....”(Suzu)

“The people who won these bids are not from different towns though. They’re all here in Crescendo”

“..... You don’t think, are they Yoshii-kun’s friends?”

“No, that’s not right”

Edgar also thought of that possibility, but he dismissed it as very unlikely.

The ones who bought the ingredients are mostly likely the players who are here right now.

Judging by their appearance, their Levels are all over the place, and they look like they’re from different clans as well.

The possibility that they are all connected to Yoshii is pretty much non-existent—

But if that’s the case, then the only way we can find out the reason behind all this is to ask them directly.

“..... Excuse me, there is something I would like to ask you”

Edgar called out to the player beside him.

He was a player with the Fighter class.

His Level was low, so it was a bit early for him to be using the Auction. Yet, the Fighter was intently gazing at the Auction Board.

“..... What do you want?”

“Are you perhaps searching for Lizard Skin as well?”

“*Haa?* If that’s all then I ain’t got time to listen to your crap”

The Fighter answered back with a sharp tongue.

Most likely, since they are currently sold out, this guy is probably waiting for the moment some Lizard Skin or Crab Claws get put up for auction.

If he relaxes for just a single moment then the ingredients will be snatched up by other players the instant they go up for bids. Everyone here is a rival, so in the current situation I can’t really blame him for getting angry with me for trying to start a

conversation.

“Why are all of you after Lizard Skin?”

“Asking “why”..... Obviously it’s because they’re profitable”

“.....?? Profitable? The Lizard Skins are?”

Unable to comprehend the Fighter’s comment, Edgar tilted his head in response.

There were times in the past where the market price of items and ingredients suddenly skyrocketed, but that was only for major events like if said items became new crafting ingredients due to a version upgrade.

If you had the proper timing and bought a ton of these ingredients for cheap, then you could sell them as soon as the prices jump. The difference in prices could easily earn you a fortune.

It was a rather simple scheme of buying and re-selling.

However, in regards to Lizard Skin and Crab Claws, there was no information to indicate that they would become ingredients for new upcoming recipes.

“Why are the Lizard Skins profitable?”

“So fucking annoying! Look that shit up on your own! Just go to the plaza and see for yourself!”

“..... The plaza?”

Before he could even feel irritated that the Fighter suddenly yelled at him, a certain question ruled over Edgar’s thoughts.

What in the world is happening at the plaza?

Edgar sent a quick glance over to Suzu, but Suzu also couldn’t grasp the meaning behind the Fighter’s words, and she could only return Edgar’s puzzled expression with one of her own.

“Edgar-kun, for now let’s go have a look at the plaza”

“..... Yea, you’re right”

The last transaction for Lizard Skin was 30 minutes ago. In other words, from here on out there won’t be any more for sale.

Determining that staying here any longer would be a waste of precious time, Edgar nodded to Suzu in reply, and they swiftly turned about. Shrouded in a tense mood, they left the Auction House.



“The secret as to why Lizard Skin became expensive must be in the plaza”.

Relying on the words of that Fighter, Edgar was thinking that he needed to conduct a thorough investigation, but the secret behind it all was unexpectedly easy to find out.

“That is.....”

It was in a corner of the plaza. Among the Social Shops trying to draw in customers, there was a spot where a remarkable crowd was being formed.

And, in the center of that crowd stood a lone player.

It was a man who both Edgar and Suzu recognized.

“.....Y, Yoshii-kun?”

Darkened skin with brown hair fashioned in a two-block cut.

His smile lit up the surroundings, a man with a playful attitude—

Over there was without a doubt, the “Lan-tard” that challenged Edgar to a contest; it was Yoshii.

“Oh hey there, Suzu-chan. And also Edgar-kun”

Yoshii waved over to Edgar and Suzu with a smile.

Calling them over in a manner as if he was trying to poke fun at them, Edgar unintentionally wore a grimace.

“..... What are you doing?”

“What am I doing..... Can’t you tell by just looking?”

“I’m asking *because* I can’t tell”

I could tell that it was Yoshii who gathered this crowd of players, but I don’t know why he had gathered them.

Edgar mumbled to himself, “I have a feeling this guy trying to pull off some kind of scam,” however-

“Sigh, as expected of a plain guy, you just don’t get it huh. Right now, to offer my support to these novice players, I’m buying a bunch of ingredients off them”

“..... You’re what?”

“Like-I-Said, in order to help these beginners with no money at all, I’m graciously lending them a hand”

When she heard Yoshii’s words, Suzu’s face instantly turned pale.

By ‘buying a bunch’..., he can’t mean—

“Yoshii-kun, is it perhaps..... Are you buying Lizard Skins from these people?”

“Precisely, Suzu-chan. But I can’t give that answer a full 100 points. The truth is that I’m not just buying Lizard Skin, you know? Crab Claws plus Animal Hair, and also..... Leather Straps as well”

“It can’t be..... ツ”

We’ve been had—

Edgar was struck by a feeling like his feet were being swept up from underneath him.

“I am buying these ingredients for 6000 manila, several times what they can get based on the auction prices. I am in desperate need of these ingredients after all, so don’t you think this idea makes everyone happy?”

“..... And, that is because you know that those are the ingredients we needed, right?”(Suzu)

“Eh? Is that true? I really had no idea~. However, I need a huge amount of those ingredients for crafting. If you two really need it then..... Let’s see, I could sell you Animal Hair for 10,000 manila a piece”

“T-Ten Thousand.....!?”

Suzu could only stare back dumbfounded at the price.

That amount of money was nearly 100 times the material store’s price. Even if they pooled their money together, it wouldn’t be enough to purchase even one of them.

“Really though~, it’s a good thing I’ve been saving up money. Well, I had to use a bit of real money mixed in with it too you see~”

“No way, you..... You used RMT?”(Edgar)

“RMT? What are you talking about. There’s no way I would do that, right?”

Being met with Edgar’s sharp glare, Yoshii replied with a sarcastic chuckle.

RMT, or “Real Money Trade”, was as the name suggests; it was a method by which you purchased in-game currency with real world money.

However, this type of trading was not officially recognized. Many MMO games, with Dragon’s Krone being among them, strictly banned these type of actions.

The reason was clearly stated, if RMT became widespread then the value of in-game currency would plummet. This would cause the price of goods to drastically increase, otherwise known as “Inflation”. Inflation would cause the game’s balance to crumble, and in order to prevent players from wanting to quit and leave the game, RMT was strictly punished. For both the people conducting RMT and for the players using it, if you were discovered then often times you would receive a penalty more severe than

the ones received for colluding or harassment.

“..... You used a rather complicated method to interfere with us huh. On the other hand, I’m quite impressed”

“Hmph, being praised by **you** doesn’t make me glad at all”

In all honesty, Yoshii devised a truly evil plan. Without having an absurd amount of money, there would be no way for him to obstruct us in such a grandiose scale.

Even if he started buying up a large amount of ingredients for dirt cheap, normally that wouldn’t be enough to cause unrelated third-parties to chase after the same ingredients with bloodthirsty eyes like they are now.

Of course this would include ingredients from the city’s material stores, but also the Auction, the Social Shops, and perhaps even... something outrageous might be happening over by the coast where Megu-san and the others are.

The beginner players were all swarming after ingredients that were previously ignored, and because of that they are unknowingly obstructing us. And, for Yoshii he would be referred to as their”Savior”; his reputation in this world would rise because of it.

Just as Yoshii had said, this idea would make everyone “happy”.

Of course, that would include everyone besides *Us* though.

“Now then, what will you do? The time you have left..... 1 hour has already passed you know?”

“Yoshii-kun..... People like you are just soo-!!”

Suzu accidentally let all her anger explode.

Yoshii-kun had prepared all of this from the very beginning. And, ever since he appeared in front of us he was just sitting here, patiently waiting.

“Oh please, you don’t have to get all mad like that, Suzu-chan. I’m only doing this to

help you open your eyes and realize that this guy is deceiving you, you know? That is, so you and I can make a wonderful love-filled Clan together”

“W-Who in their right mind would ever..... ツ!”

“Suzu-san, calm down”

Edgar tried to pacify Suzu who was quaking with fury.

Even if we sent our time condemning Yoshii right now, it wouldn’t change a single thing. Rather, if we remonstrated Yoshii in front of all these players who are currently being helped by him, we would be the ones in a disadvantageous situation instead.

“Do what you like, Yoshii. As long as there’s still 1 hour left, we’ll do something about it”(Edgar)

“Oh, is that so? Fufu, but I wonder what you’ll do. Just look, more and more people are coming here wanting me to buy their ingredients, you know? Ah, you won’t go saying “This contest is invalid~” at this point, right? If you did that then some nasty rumors about you two might start spreading around. It would be hard for you to show your faces in this world anymore you know?”

As if he had already seized victory, Yoshii fired back with a sneer on his face.

Before Yoshii’s eyes, was an army of players gathered here only for him.

As the way things are, they will probably keep coming for more than an hour. In other words, for more than an hour the supply of “Lizard Skin” “Crab Claws” “Animal Hair” and “Leather Straps” will continue to be non-existent. They would be harder to obtain than even the highest rarity of “Artifact” level items.

However, as Yoshii brazenly wore a dignified expression as he turned to Edgar, he saw that Edgar still had light in his eyes; that he had not yet given up hope.

“Oh really. *We* are the ones who will win this contest, so why would we do something like that? I’ll say the same to you. In 1 hour, don’t go telling us this whole contest is invalid”

“Ha ha ha, those are quite the words, Edgar-kun”

Yoshii let out a haughty laugh.

For some reason his voice really pisses me off. If possible, I never want to see his face again.

“..... Let’s go, Suzu-san”

Grabbing hold of Suzu’s hand, Edgar left the plaza while trying to keep his anger under control like he told Suzu to do just a while earlier.

I’ll vent my anger on this shitty”Lan-tard”later.

As long as we don’t have much money, it will be impossible to buy ingredients from theses beginner players who are lured in by Yoshii’s deep pockets.

In other words, rather than with money, we have to think of an alternative strategy to deal with this.

And, since I am the one who told Suzu-san that we would definitely win— It is “My” responsibility to get to work.

CHAPTER 24

THE THREE CARDS

“That was absurd! There was a crazy scramble whenever a Lizardman spawned you know!? Could you believe it!? I’m jealous of the Lizardmen for being so popular!”

“..... I understand so you don’t have to go shouting it”

They were atop a hill that had a clear view of Crescendo’s coastline. A soothing ocean breeze drifted through the air, and mixed in with that aroma... was the anger-filled voice of Megu.

The reason behind Megu’s rage was within Edgar’s expectations; the competition over Lizardmen and Crab Scissors had evolved into a full-blown disaster—

From this hill that overlooked the coastline, you could easily see the players forming a giant black cluster. The sea-shore was filled to its maximum capacity.

“But anyways, why did Yoshii hafta to do all this to us?”(Andou)

“To get in our way by using money... that sorta thing really suits his pighead personality”(Yamabuki)

With their noses flaring up, Andou and Yamabuki expressed their anger just like Megu did.

According to Yamabuki, Yoshii’s family is pretty wealthy, so he was able to boost his level with a ton of cash shop items.^[1]

If he’s loaded with real world money, then it isn’t strange that he turned to using RMT.

“An’ so, what will we do? At this rate, Suzu’s gonna be taken away by that lan-tard! Do something, Ed!”

“It’s all right, Megu. I... I will never make a clan with Yoshii-kun”

Suzu spoke in a decisive tone.

But, Andou didn't look too happy when he heard that.

"No, even if you say that..... If we break our promise then we'll become the bad guys, right? If that happens..."

".....Yes, that is true, but....."

Suzu was unable to come up with a response to Andou.

What Andou said was true, but the whole story wasn't that simple.

Because of his nasty personality, Yoshii was able to come up with this evil plan to sabotage us. If we ended up discarding our promise, then rumors filled with half-truths will surely spread both in this world and in the real world. The pressure from our surroundings will likely drive us into a corner.

If that were to happen then even if we reported Yoshii to the admins for Harassment and using RMT, then we'll only be subjected to bad rumors and people would talk about us behind our back.

"Andou, how many ingredients did end up with from the Mob hunting?"(Edgar)

"After we came back from resupplying our items we didn't get to hunt a single Mob you know? All we have right now are 10 [Lizard Skins] and 14 [Crab Claws]"

"..... So the amount of Animal Hair and Leather Straps we have is 0. And we only have 40 minutes left, huh..."

While confirming their current situation, Edgar began collecting his thoughts.

The money we have amounts to about 5,000 manila in total. There are players gathered in the plaza who are willing to sell the items we need because Yoshii put out a notice for them, but it will be very difficult get those players to sell to us instead.

The material stores don't reset until after the 40 minutes are up, so the only place to buy the ingredients would be the auction. However, considering that the prices are currently inflated, it's almost impossible for us to buy all the ingredients we need.

And then there's Mob hunting.

Considering that the coast is flooded with players blinded by the prospect of money, there is a high probability that there are also a lot of players at the Rabasta Woodlands where Mobs dropped Animal Hair.

In order to break this deadlock, we either need a considerable amount of money, or we need a highly organized combat strategy so we can defeat Mobs before other players got the chance to.

The way things are, I guess I have no choice but to log into Aran when I get the opportunity.

It was many times easier to hunt as Aran; plus he has plenty of in-game money as well. It will be troublesome having to come up with an excuse for Suzu and the others though.

"Hey, Edgar. How about we try asking the rest of the class if they can help with ingredients? It seems like quite a few of them are logged in already, so they might have the items we need if we manage to contact them, right?"

Thus, while Edgar was deep in thought, yet another unexpected plan came from Andou of all people.

"OOH! That just might work!"

"I see... Friends, huh"

Yamabuki followed up, and Edgar also gave a nod.

If we asked random players for their ingredients then they probably wouldn't help out. But, if they were Friends..... Or rather, if they were classmates of ours then it might work out.

"Alright then. Andou and Yamabuki, can I ask you two to get in touch with our

classmates? As for me..... I'll try something else"

"Something else?"

Because he was a loner, Edgar couldn't help in that regard.

However, after hearing what Andou had to say, Edgar realized that he had a few "Cards" he could rely on.

"There was a *really* persistent Player who sort of "forced" me to be her friend, you see. I'll go ask if that child can help out"



That girl who so shrewdly earned herself a place on Edgar's Friend List, her response to Edgar's plea was so instantaneous that you would think she was monitoring their situation this entire time.

[SHISHOOUu~! IT'S TIME, it's **finally** timeeee! Just leave everything to meee!]

"....."

Reading the reply Usa sent, Edgar had a slight headache as he easily imagined her jumping for joy when she saw his message.

The first person who Edgar called for help was Usa.

If Usa was not completely dimwitted then she wouldn't be at the Saradin Basin again, so she should be somewhere near Crescendo instead.

If we're lucky, then even if we can't go hunting in the Rabasta Woodlands because of the other players, we could still making it through with the Animal Hairs that Usa has stockpiled.

If possible I want as much Animal Hair as we can get, and we can sell the surplus to Yoshii and use that money to buy the rest of the ingredients we need.

In the worst case scenario where Yoshii has enough balls to say,"I won't buy any ingredients from you lot", then we could just put the Animal Hairs up for auction and

I'm sure they will disappear in the blink of an eye.

""Usa-san"? Is that an old acquaintance?"(Suzu)

"No, she is just a player who I helped out when I was investigating the Samurai Hunter incident"

"Does that mean..... Is Usa-san perhaps, a Girl?"

Suzu was interested in Usa for some reason, and she pressed Edgar for answers about Usa's true identity.

Huh, what?

Even though you showed no interest in the Moon Step?

"She is a female Mohm. Her class is Samurai and apparently she started playing around the same time we did"

"..... Hmm~, that so"

" ? ? ? "

Suzu seemed to have latched on to a particular part of his reply. Above Edgar's head floated several large Question Marks.

Why are you looking at me like that.

Did I say something that offended you? Did I?

"I-In any case, there is the possibility that the people I and Andou contacted won't be able to bail us out completely..... We can't be too optimistic"

Our classmates might be of no use, the Rabasta Woodlands might be filled with players, and we might not be able to hunt Mobs, anything is possible.

That's why we need 2 or 3 countermeasures.

"So~, What should we do? Do we all go somewhere far out to hunt Mobs?"(Andou)

“No, let’s do something else. Andou and Yamabuki, please go with Megu-san and head for the coast one more time. Suzu-san and I will stay at the auction”

“Huh? Again?”

“Will that be alright?” Megu looked apprehensive.

Megu-san is right, the possibility that they will be able to hunt Lizardmen and Crab Scissors is extremely low. And it’s not very likely that we’ll be able to buy any ingredients from the auction either.

No, from a normal standpoint, our chances are nonexistent.

—*But, this is necessary for me to play my next “card”.*

“Oh. When we have 10 minutes left, I want us all to meet in front of the auction house. From there we will all focus on crafting”

“But then, what will we do if we can’t get enough ingredients?”

“We will have enough. No matter the cost”

Yamabuki timidly asked that question, but Edgar gave a firm response.

I can’t hand over Suzu-san to Yoshii no matter what.

My Second Card is extremely risky, but I will use it. I will even use my “Aran Card” if I have to.



Edgar decided that he would save his “Using Aran to get the ingredients” Card for last. It’s true that with Aran I will be able to gather the ingredients one way or another. But in order to do that I need to log out of Edgar for a while.

If I log out of Edgar while we’re in such a critical situation I’ll probably be scolded for it later. But, that isn’t the main problem with that plan.

If I log back into Edgar suddenly carrying a large amount of ingredients, then the others will likely grow suspicious of how I got them. And if instead I came back with a ton of money to buy ingredients then the result will be the same.

I can basically only use Aran when all other options are closed. In other words, I have to save it as my Last Card.

“Nothing is for sale, huh”(Suzu)

“Yup”

The atmosphere at the Auction House felt like it was filled with static as players were itching to buy “Lizard Skin” and “Crab Claws” as soon as they were on sale.

Standing among the crowd was Edgar and Suzu who came here a second time.

10 minutes have passed since they arrived here, and yet the auction showed no signs of moving.

The players who were lucky enough to get items from hunting Lizardmen and Crab Scissors by the coast are likely in the plaza where Yoshii is, that was the natural place to be.

“..... If, if we end up going over the time limit, then you don’t have to feel responsible for it, Edgar-kun”

“Eh?”

With her gaze set on the Auction Board, Suzu’s quiet voice brushed against Edgar’s ear.

“The one who decided to have a contest with Yoshii-kun was me... so you don’t have to worry about it”

If only... If only I rejected Yoshii-kun clearly, then none of this would have happened.

Suzu was trapped by her feelings of guilt.

But, Edgar shook his head at those words.

“No, that’s not right. I’m the one who urged Suzu-san to accept it. The responsibility

lies with me”

However, it doesn't matter who's to blame, there's nothing we can do about it now. Since the both of them understood that fact, they continued to gaze at the Auction Board that was being swarmed by other players, all the while remaining in silence.

“..... Even, even if I have to make a clan with Yoshii-kun”

As if being weighed down by that heavy silence, Suzu again let out a few quiet words. “That sort of thing will never happen, so don't worry”(Suzu)

“..... “that sort of thing”?”

“ I will have to join Yoshii-kun clan because of the promise, right? Even if I am in Yoshii-kun's clan, I will still play together with Edgar-kun..... With you and everyone else, same as before”

Still staring at the Board, Suzu said those words.

That was Suzu's true feelings— Her one desire.

In order to show their affection, a male player would invite a female player into his clan, but that had no binding effect from a system's standpoint.

Other MMO games had systems that implemented “Marriage”, but that sort of thing didn't exist in Dragon's Krone. Joining some guy's clan did not have a lasting effect, it was nothing more than a verbal promise.

That's why, if perhaps... Even if Suzu made a clan with Yoshii, she would still play together with everyone.

“..... I don't like it”

“Eh? Don't like.....”

Edgar let out a harsh and heavy voice. Suzu was stunned by his tone.

“Don’t misunderstand. As long as I say things will be all right, Suzu-san will be making a clan with the me and the others..... and we will continue playing together like we always have. You joining Yoshii’s clan, I definitely won’t let Suzu-san experience something horrible like that. Even if you are not bound by the system, I will never allow that to happen”

“ッ!?”

Those words caused Suzu’s heart to stutter.

However, the one who was most surprised by those words was not Suzu; it was the person who avoided human contact, the popular livestreamer who said he would live in this world by himself. The person most surprised, was Edgar.

In the past I never wanted to play Dragon’s Krone with real life friends.

Human relationships bring nothing but trouble; they only weigh you down.

Even now, Edgar felt that statement still held some truth. But if he were to be honest with himself, those bitter feelings no longer clouded his heart.

“E, Edgar-kun.....”

“It’s alright. The Second Card, is already set in motion”

The person Edgar had called, was someone who he hesitated to contact even more so than Usa. A Player with a whole different level of “risk” involved.

“..... Card? What “Card”?”

“You’ll know soon enough. A ‘Helper’ other than Usa”

I already put out the bait.

It was”That Guy’s” favorite. Such alluring bait that only I can cast.

Now, eat it up. Bite on hard.

While continuing to pray, Edgar waited for”That Guy’s”response.

The auction showed no movement. No matter which ingredient, the last one sold was an hour and a half ago.

One minute passed, and yet another minute passed. The time was drawing ever closer. And the Time Limit, was fast approaching.

And, it was then.

In the corner of his eye, a notification popped up; the notice of a *message*. Edgar immediately opened it.

When Edgar read the name of the sender, his cheeks curled into a grin.
—It's Him.

["Lizard Skin"and"Crab Claws","Animal Hair"and"Leather Straps", Got it. I'll bring you everything you need]

That was his reply to Edgar's message.
"That Guy"ended his reply with only this:

[I will arrive in 20 minutes. In exchange for the ingredients you better prepare my reward, "Aran". You better be ready to tell me"**The Secret Behind Moon Step**"]

The name of the sender was"Chrono"—

He was the Leader of the Clan that Aran had joined in the past. The Clan where Strength was Absolute:"The Grave Carpenters".

Footnotes:

1.

TL note: I took some liberties with the translation of “cash shop items”. The original text says Yoshii boosted his level by [going full force with micro-transactions]. Basically he bought a bunch of things such as exp boosts or perhaps even used a paid “gacha” system to get rare items. The specifics aren’t explained but I went with “Cash shop items” because it’s easier to understand.

CHAPTER 25

THE TRUTH BEHIND MOON STEP

As the Clan Master of "Grave Carpenters", Chrono formed his clan by gathering players who had absolute confidence in their own abilities.

The conditions to entering the clan were that you needed to be Level 70 or higher, and have a PvP win-rate of at least 70%.

After meeting those requirements, you would then have a PvP match versus a clan member, and based on the results you would be accepted or rejected from the clan.

The clan member who Aran fought against was none other than the Clan Master Chrono.

The reason for this was because Chrono personally desired to have a match against Aran who, at the time, had made a name for himself at PvP.

Chrono had picked the all-rounder class of Fighter, and his balanced playstyle of using a one-handed sword together with a small shield made him strong in both offense and defense. Despite his muscular build, he was able to perform unbelievably delicate and precise movements. With these weapons in his arsenal he was a proud warrior who was undefeated even after 100 matches.

When he streamed many Listeners would tune in, and in the livestream rankings the name "Chrono" was always in the top 5.

However, after his PvP match with Aran, he suddenly quit livestreaming.

Aran with his Moon Step, he was easily able to break Chrono's undefeated win-streak.

"Chrono..... san?"

"Yea. He is the Master of the Clan I was in before I quit playing"(Edgar)

"That Chrono-san is going to assist us?"(Suzu)

Edgar gave a slight nod.

“I left that clan quite some time ago, and my character’s name is different from the one I used in the past, so I wasn’t sure he would respond. But, it looks like he will provide us with the ingredients”

“Really!? Oh, thank goodness.....”

A look of relief spread across Suzu’s face.

However, Edgar had just told a small lie to Suzu.

Because when Edgar sent Chrono that message, he was 100% sure Chrono would lend them his strength. The reason why was because Edgar had cast his bait.

The thing that caused Chrono to taste defeat; the bait known as”Moon Step”.

“Considering the portion that Usa will bring us, I think we should have enough to clear the Clan Quest. Suzu-san, can you tell that to Megu-san and the others when they arrive in front of the Auction House? I have to go meet Chrono”

“Okay, got it!”

As if saying ‘strike while the iron is hot’, Suzu turned and quickly ran out of the Auction House.

The Time Limit is in 30 minutes.

Chrono said he would arrive in 20.

It shouldn’t take long to craft the items as we have the Recipe and ingredients but still, we’ll clear the quest just in the nick of time.

“..... Time to go”

While watching Suzu leave, Edgar whispered to himself.

We are in trouble right now because I made a miscalculation. At that time, I should have ignored Yoshii’s invitation.

That is why, I will clean up this mess on my own.

Suzu-san, Megu-san, Andou and Yamabuki, it's fine that they don't know the "Whole Truth".

Edgar gently opened the Auction House door.

As Suzu slipped away to send Megu a message, Edgar left the area.

The place he was headed, was at the entrance of Crescendo.

Out in the Field Area where PvP was permitted.



After receiving his first message from Chrono, Edgar waited 10 minutes before the 2nd message came.

[Tell me where to meet]

That was the entire message.

Edgar went to a small oasis that was a bit far off from Crescendo, and he replied to Chrono with a message containing the coordinates for his location.

Soon after, a Player fully clad in black arrived at his location.

"Are you the bastard called Edgar?"

"It's been a while, Chrono. As usual you are quite..... "dark", huh"

Chrono looked the same way he did in the past.

Black hair and Dark skin. Black eyes and Black armor.

If the sword on his waist is the same one from before, then it was of the 2nd highest rarity. The Legendary weapon: "Black Widow".^[1]

The sword's name came from the English word for a black widow spider, and it also possessed a strong toxin just like its namesake. The toxin from this blade caused an abnormal status much stronger than "Poison". If you were struck by this blade's "Deadly Poison" then you will surely end up in a dangerous situation due to the extremely high constant damage.

“I’m not here for some friendly chit-chat. I brought the ingredients you need. And how about you?”

“I’m ready whenever. Of course I would be”

“..... Watch your mouth, Aran. I can take off whenever I want’a you know?”

His sharp gaze was followed by an even sharper tongue.

Just like his Black Widow that was covered in poison, his eyes were dyed in a dangerous color.

“The name’s Edgar. I’m not Aran right now. I’ll be sure to give you the information you want. But before that, can you hand over the ingredients?”

“..... What did just you say?”

“I have to send those ingredients off as soon as possible. So I would like to have them first”

There’s less than 10 minutes until the deadline that Yoshii set.

If I went back on foot then I might not make it in time, but if I sent the ingredients to Suzu-san through the mail then there should be no problem.

“Hmph, fine then. You’ll have to take your sweet time telling me about Moon Step though”

“..... Sorry about that”

Edgar opened his Item Inventory.

Chrono handed him the requested items.

20 Lizard Skins, 20 Crab Claws, 20 Animal Hair, and 20 Leather Straps.

Exactly the ingredients he requested.

Operating the menu, Edgar quickly sent them through the mail to Suzu.

“..... The exact number I requested. Good job getting these considering the current situation”

“We are the [Grave Carpenters]. Like hell we’d have a hard time gathering these shitty ass ingredients”

Chrono indifferently spat out those words.

How exactly did he obtain these ingredients? I think it’s best not to ask.

It will only give me headaches.

“Hey, who cares about that shit, hurry up and tell me. I went out of my way just to come here you know?”

Chrono’s impatience oozed from his gaze.

It seems that he cares about nothing other than the Moon Step’s secret.

“Fine then. I’ll tell you the secret behind Moon Step”

Edgar slowly opened his mouth.

The Secret to Moon Step is—

He said those words ever so quietly,

“The Moon Step is... a simple technique that connects 【Ground Rush】 with 【Tsubame-Gaeshi】 and finishes with 【All or Nothing】 ”



On his journey to seek out the truth, the person who arrived at this place is left with only 2 options.

Whether to accept that truth, or to deny it. His options are only those.

If the truth exceeded one’s imagination, then that truth will become nourishment to

help foster one's knowledge in the future.

However, if said truth fails to meet expectations—

Then instead of accepting that truth, humans tend to fall into a state of utter despair.

“..... What, You think I'm stupid or some shit?”

In a low murmur, Edgar could hear Chrono's voice rattled with rage.

“That information, It's the same fucking info that's written on the Wiki”

On the Dragon's Krone Wiki, there was a page created by volunteers containing their collective data on Moon Step.

[Our hypothesis is that the Moon Step is produced by using the High-speed skill 【Ground Rush】 , and from there you circle around your opponent by using the Counter skill 【Tsubame-Gaeshi】 , and lastly you use skill that turns defense into offense 【All or Nothing】 to strike them down from behind.]

What Edgar had just told Chrono, was the exact same information that was written on the Wiki after analyzing Aran's livestream videos.

“..... So you think I'm still hiding something, right?”

“Of course you are. All the bastards who tried that method have failed”

“Then~, How about I show you?”

Edgar smoothly drew his katana.

Chrono instinctively grabbed the hilt of that blade.

“What kind of shit are you trying to pull”

“You don't believe a word I say. So the only way is to show you firsthand, right?”

Edgar gracefully placed his katana by his side. Relaxing his wrist, he changed into the

【Lower Stance】 .

Then he activated 【Ground Rush】 .

Edgar's body glided across the sand floor.

And, while blowing up a cloud of dust, he fearlessly charged right before Chrono's eyes.

And, in that moment—

“..... ツ!?”

In the next instant, Edgar's body suddenly shined with pale blue light. The air trembled, and Edgar's figure disappeared within a fraction of a second.

Within that cloud of sand that charged towards him, Chrono saw a ring of light.

Where that ring of light disappeared to, was behind him.

That was proof that the skill 【Tsubame-Gaeshi】 from the 【Middle Stance】 was activated.

“I did it a bit slower than usual. With that you should be able to understand, right?”

“..... Are you... fucking serious”

Chrono stood dumbfounded on the spot.

Without a doubt, he had just witnessed Edgar connect the 【Lower Stance】 【Ground Rush】 to the 【Middle Stance】 【Tsubame-Gaeshi】 .

It was a feat that should have been impossible: Connecting two skills from different Skill Trees—

“If I had to say that the secret was, I would say it is the 【Combination Cancel Window】 that each individual skill has. This Cancellation Window, it only happens for an instant..... It's only a few milliseconds, but during that short amount of time you can cancel any skill”

“..... ツ!? No way. That sort of thing, I've never heard of it before!”

“Well, whether you believe it or not is up to you”

Saying that, Edgar wore a wry smile as he once again ran at Chrono using Moon Step. The air shook, and the pale blue light circled around.

Being chased by that light, Edgar glance over at Chrono with a look of composure.

“..... So this is the secret to Moon Step huh”

(TL Note: Chrono’s POV)

Crunch, Chrono vigorously ground his teeth as he spat out those words.

Even if I don’t try it for myself, I can understand just by imagining it. There has to be some sort of Cancellation Window that exists for only a few milliseconds, but to actually have the proper timing to match that Window with the activation of another skill is just plain impossible.

But, this bastard is able to do it in rapid succession. To top it off, he’s doing it while in actual combat.

There were a few stories on the Wiki where people claimed they used the Moon Step, but the reason why no player had solid proof is because of *this* huh.

Even if they pulled it off out of sheer luck, there’s no way they’d be able to do it consistently.

“I’ll let you know about one more thing. This is not *all* there is to Moon Step. There are 2 more components that bring forth Moon Step’s true form. The skill that brings your speed and dexterity stats up to the Counter Stop, all the way up to the highest limits; there’s still the activation of the skill 【Perseverance】 ”

“ッ!!”

【Perserverance】 , one of the Samurai Class’s iconic skills, a Passive Skill that enhances your own abilities. It was a skill with the effect: “When you are on the brink of death, All of your stats will be boosted”.

In other words, when you are in a near-death state your speed and dexterity would be capped at their maximum. Yet, Aran was able to activate Moon Step while traveling at such frighteningly fast speeds.

“..... Are you some goddamn monster”

Skill Cancelling required impeccable timing, like trying to slip through the eye of a needle.

Using it in rapid succession required machine-like precision.

And above all, you were constantly living on the edge where a single blunder could cost you everything. It required a steel resolve to pull it all off.

The more Chrono knew of the truth, the more he came to understand Aran’s boundless potential.

The “truth” that Moon Step is a technique that no ordinary man can obtain.

“I’ve heard what you have to say. About Moon Step’s secret; about *Aran’s* secret”

Chrono spoke softly.

Chrono had no choice but to accept it.

The Truth Behind Moon Step... and the insurmountable wall that lay before him.

Footnotes:

1.

TL side note: With this note we now know the 5 different rarities.

From lowest to highest they are: Common, Uncommon, Rare, Legendary, and Artifact

CHAPTER 26

HOUKAGO DC-BU

In the corner of his eye was a clock, it joyously informed him that the time was at hand.

The current time in this virtual world, was Midnight—

It was the time he was waiting for; the time of the *promise*.

Yoshii was in the plaza buying ingredients from the players gathered there, all the while thinking that Suzu and Edgar would arrive any minute.

Very soon he would be with Suzu, his imagination was filled with thoughts of a clan just for the two of them.

“Yoshii-kun”

“..... Oh hey there, Suzu-chan. You came~”

Long awaited sound brushed against Yoshii’s ear, a soft and gentle voice.

Among the massive crowd of players trying to sell him ingredients, he spotted the figure of Suzu, clad in her white robe.

Suzu’s complexion had several dark shadows etched onto it.

The moment he saw her, Yoshii was now sure of one thing.

I won.

I beat Edgar-kun, I won this contest.

“Hmm~ What’s the matter, Suzu-chan? Are you upset?”

“.....”

Yoshii was wearing a sly smile, but Suzu said nothing in response.

She did not move from where she stood, simply staring at Yoshii without a single word.

“Now then, how about you come over here. Hmm..... Did Edgar-kun run away because he thought he would lose?”

Yoshii quickly scanned the surroundings, but Edgar was no where to be seen.

I guess he was disheartened knowing he would lose, he went and disappeared huh.

Hmph, what happened to all that talk about”With one hour left, I’ll pull something off”

While imagining Edgar grinding his teeth in frustration, Yoshii lightly chuckled as he walked over to the silent Suzu.

If was as if, he was a knight, going to fetch his princess.

“Well now, Suzu-chan. What shall I name our clan? I want it to have a wonderful name that shows our love to the world, Suzu-cha——ッ!?”

And, as he was basking in euphoria, the awfully talkative Yoshii suddenly shut his mouth.

This was because, behind Suzu came a terrifying gaze. Standing there was a dark skinned elf—— Megu.

That gaze sent chills of fear running through Yoshii’s entire body.

That girl, if I remember she is Suzu-chan’s friend——

“.....Aaah~ it’s no use. I can’t hold it back any longer, nope”(Megu)

“Really though, he even said [A wonderful name that shows our love to the world]. You’re quite the shameless bastard huh”

“.....ッ!?”

Yoshii’s expression instantly grew stiff.

Standing behind Suzu... was not only Megu.

A bald-headed Fighter, and a Knight that carried the same attitude as him.

It was Andou and Yamabuki.

“Y-You are..... Yamabuki-kun?”

“..... But ‘cha know~, even I would feel disgusted by that. Yoshii”(Yamabuki)

“Why are you here.....!?”

Seeing Yamabuki who he knew very well, Yoshii was taken aback.

So Suzu-chan wasn’t alone with just Edgar-kun huh.

No, more importantly, now of all times, why are they here.

“S-So what. Do you plan on separating me and Suzu-chan by force?”

“No, Stupid. Why’d the hell we have to do somethin’ like that”(Yamabuki)

“Fine, I never want to talk to you again, but since you don’t get it I’ll say it here. Use those repulsive eyes of yours and have a *goood haard* look at our statuses!”

Megu’s anger was on the verge of exploding as she cried out.

Being shaken by her intimidating aura, Yoshii opened up Megu’s status.

Floating before Yoshii, was a Status Window.

Looking at that screen, Yoshii immediately noticed that an unbelievable name was written there.

“.....Th, Th, The [After-School DC Club]? Wh-Wha, What the hell is this!?”

“Obviously it’s our Clan”(Megu)

A somewhat unusual Clan Name was written on Megu’s Status.

However, Megu was not the only one who wore that Name.

Andou and Yamabuki.

It was even written on Suzu’s status——

“A-Are you kidding!? Even though I bought all the ingredients, How!?”

“..... Well, I really had to bust my back you know”

“I can’t believe this,” it happened while Yoshii still had swirls in his eyes.

Like saying that there was no escape, a sturdy arm wrapped around Yoshii’s shoulder.

A black haired and plain-looking guy.

It was Edgar.

“.....Y-YOU!?”

“Hmm? What’s the matter? Is there something stuck on my face? Well, there’s something stuck to my status screen that wasn’t there before though”

Forcefully placing his arm on Yoshii's shoulder, Edgar turned to him with a wide grin.

And once again, on Edgar's status screen was a name. The same clan name as Suzu and the others; the name "After-School DC Club" floated above him.

"H-H-How did you!?"

"This contest is *our* win, Yoshii"

"Why!? How did you clear the Clan Quest!? Did you use some glitch to get around it!?"

"..... Hey, c'mon now. What's with those false accusations"

"ッ!?"

Edgar sharply glared at Yoshii.

Putting his hand on the back of Yoshii's head, Edgar placed him in a headlock.

"W-Wait..... Are you raising your hand against me!? If you do that, then I'll call the GMs——"

"Go ahead. Either way it's more beneficial for us. We can tell them about someone who used RMT after all"

".....ッ!?"

Yoshii's expression turned pale.

Seeing Edgar's menacing gaze, the fundamental idea that "It was impossible to be physically harmed by another person while you were in town" quickly vanished from Yoshii's thoughts.

"I, I never used RMT. You don't have any proof of it"

"Shut it. Now listen well, I'm *really* close to getting pissed off. So stop wasting your breath. I'm sure you don't want to lose all your precious items and money, right?"

".....Y-YEsh"

From Yoshii's mouth came a reply almost like a shriek.

Yoshii was thoroughly shaking in his boots, but Edgar continued to pile on threats.

"Yoshii, since I won this contest, how about I ask a favor from you?"

"W-Wh, What might that be?"

"Don't worry, there's some merit in it for you too. You've spent all your time here buying ingredients, isn't that right?"

".....Eh?"

Not knowing the meaning behind those words, Yoshii stood momentarily confused.

“B-Buying..... ingredients?”

“Yup. You said you needed them, right? Lizard Skin, and Crab Claws, also Leather Straps..... What else am I missing?”

“““ANIMAAL HAAAAIR!”“““

The moment Edgar sent a quick glance over to them, Megu, Andou, and Yamabuki pulled out an enormous amount of “Animal Hair”; so much so that it was overflowing out of their hands.

And just like the pile of animal hair they held in both arms, big bright grins spilled onto their faces.

“Wha..... how, huh, wa”

“Well, we have a really reliable comrade you see. Despite the current shortage, she was able to give us a considerable amount of Animal Hair”

The person who brought all this animal hair, was none other than Usa.

Perhaps she possessed incredibly good fortune. When Usa went to Rabasta Woodlands there was already a bunch of players there, but she always managed to come up on top. Again and again, Usa was victorious in her struggles and obtained all this animal hair.

“W-W-Wh, Why do I have to buy them from you guys!”

“Weren’t you supposed to be the Savior of beginner players? We’re beginners too you know. And also.....”

“..... *Hiii*”

Edgar peered into Yoshii’s eyes.

The overwhelming fear caused Yoshii to let out another squeal.

“Everyone wanted to report you to the admins because they suspected you of using RMT, but you know, I was thinking it would be fine to let you off the hook”

“..... ツ”

“To report, or not to report..... I’m having trouble deciding”

“I-I, I-I-I, I never used RMT!..... I never used it, but..... Your ingredients..... I’ll buy them”

The crestfallen Yoshii hung his head.

Seeing his appearance, Megu and the others rejoiced.

“Wow, Wow! He’ll buy them for 6,000 Manila a piece, and we have about 40 of them so..... I don’t know how much that is, but aren’t we like, going to be super wealthy

now!?”

“Man, I feel bad for calling you disgusting, you [lan-trad]!”

“..... *Uuu*”

Wahhaaha, Megu and the others erupted with joy.

However, among them there was one person, only Suzu stood silently gazing at Yoshii, all the while wearing the same dull facial expression.

It was like that gaze was filled with deep pity towards Yoshii.

“ッ! S, Suzu-chan! Pleaase forgive mee! All I wanted, I just wanted to make a clan together with you”

“Please understand,” Noticing her gaze, Yoshii made a desperate plea to Suzu.

Making light of the tense mood from earlier, he cried out with tears in his eyes, as if he was made out to be the victim.

“Yoshii-kun.....”

Very quietly, Suzu cast her gaze downward.

Time passed, it was only a few seconds, but for Yoshii it felt like time had stopped; it

was a painfully long time.

And then, as if gathering her resolve, Suzu took a deep breath, and once again turned her gaze to Yoshii.

— Completely unlike her usual self, that gaze was extremely icy and cold.

“..... I can’t make a clan just by myself you know”(Yoshii)

“..... Go die.....”

Suzu only said those words.

As if his waist was shattered into a million pieces, Yoshii sank to the floor.

Seeing him, Edgar couldn’t help but let out a laugh.

A worthless man and a worthless contest.

But as proof of their triumph, the clan “After-School DC Club” let out their first victory cry, as newborn fledglings to this world of Dragon’s Krone.



I have never seen Sasaki-san (Megu-san) in such high spirits.

Warm rays of sunshine were dancing in a certain classroom at Kasumigaoka High-School. Megu was wearing an almost creepy smile as she approached Ran who looked

at a loss for words.

The reason for Megu-san's good mood is pretty obvious.

Because of the incident with Yoshii yesterday, they were able to get their hands on a substantial amount of money.

That being said, when you include their Helper Usa, the money they "liquidated" from Yoshii was distributed amongst everyone, so each individual didn't receive much.

Or rather, for me that amount of money is like a small drop in the bucket, but for Megu-san who's been living her life in poverty ever since she started playing, it was apparently an unbelievable amount of money.

"Heey~ there, Ed! Yesterday you were really cool too! I just want to say it straight, that you're the best for saving us!"

"Well, thanks"

Should I try stealthily giving her a ton of money from Aran?

She would probably die from shock.

"..... Say, though it's about Yoshizumi (Yoshii). Apparently he's saying home from school today, but ya think the reason is *that*?"

Seeing that he pops his head into the neighboring class from time to time, Yamabuki

brought up that info.

“..... Eh, what, so that lan-tard is skipping school?”

“He was all raring to go yesterday, but I guess he’s sulking in bed right now”

“Well yea, he went through some bad times. Though he got what he deserved”

No sympathy whatsoever, saying it like he didn’t even care, in response to Andou’s question Megu and Yamabuki voiced respective “Of course he would be” while nodding.

Immediately after Yoshii bought ingredients from Ran and the others, very strangely, Yoshii suddenly disappeared. Megu was saying “I’m pissed he just up and logged out,” but apparently the real situation was different.

It was because in that short period of time Yoshii had his “Account Banned” by the admins of Dragon’s Krone.

Of course this was a reality that Ran and the others did not know about. When a new player came to City of Crescendo he saw a Player just handing out money so he reported it to the admins. After the admins investigated Yoshii’s account, they discovered signs that he had used RMT.

Of course, using RMT was obviously a breach of the code of conduct. The admins determined that Yoshii had malicious intents as he tried to break the game’s balance by handing out money to beginner players, and they promptly issued a ban on his account. The reason that Yoshii sunk into the ground, was because he was forcefully ejected from the world of Dragon’s Krone.

“It got a bit difficult along the way, but it’s great that we were able to make a clan huh”

“That’s right. Although I didn’t think it was cause so much headache”

As the delighted Suzu spoke, Ran replied as if he was stuck with a bad aftertaste.

As I thought, I have to start treating my sub-character as a main one as well.

I guess I should start the grind and level up Edgar huh.

I never know what will happen in the future after all. This time we were lucky enough to pull through because of Chrono, but the way he is I doubt he’d be willing to help again.

“Ah, now that I think about it, there’s something I didn’t hear about”

And so, as if he had just remembered something, Ran spoke up.

“Huh? You didn’t hear about something”

“About that clan name..... Who came up with it?”

By the time Ran joined up with Suzu and the others, the Clan Quest was already finished, and their clan had been established.

And it was given the name "After-School DC Club"^[1].

"Ooh..... The name huh"

"Well, we were low on time after all"

"..... So that name, Andou came up with it huh"

Andou awkwardly scratched his head when Ran pressed that question.

Honestly speaking..... I would've liked to have a cooler name.

Once a clan name is decided it can't be changed after all, so complaining about it now is a bit pointless.

"..... I guess, it's pretty lame huh, Edogawa-kun"

Suzu interrupted Ran's conversation with a soft voice.

"Eh?..... Oh, yea, it is kinda lame"

"That name, I wanted it to capture the feeling of us all playing together though....."

"..... Huh?"

Hearing those words, Ran grew stiff as if he was struck by an attack with the “petrify” effect.

You’re telling me, the one who made that name was—

“..... The one who came up with that name, was Suzu-san?”

“Yup. It was me”

“.....*Ouh*”

His words stuck in his throat. Letting out a croak like the cries of a frog, at the same time Ran’s chest violently pounded.

In that instant, Ran’s thoughts were blown away and became pure white.

“Uh..... ah, I mean..... i-it’s a pretty good name, yeah. I think it’s real great”

“Ah, Edogawa’s acting weird”

“You’re flustered huh, Ed. You’re just *waay* too easy to read”

Ran was like a fish out of water. Megu and the others fired snide remarks at him while wearing wide grins.

And, seeing the flustered Ran, the gap between him and the reliable Edgar was somehow amusing. Suzu’s shoulders shook as she tried to hold back her laughter, smiling all the while.

A relaxing afternoon, the sound of their classmate's conversations filled the classroom.

In all that clamor, the sound of Suzu and her friend's laughter could be heard, as their noise danced around the classroom.



Author Afterword:

This marks the end of Volume 3.

For all your impressions and pointing out errors, Thank You So Very Much.

For you continued readership, Yoroshiku Onegaishimasu!

Ash Dancer's Afterword:

Thanks to those who showed their support, and an extra thank you if you also supported the author by buying the light novel.

Next volume is my favorite so be sure to stick around!

Footnotes:

1.

TL note: "After-School DC Club" is otherwise known as "Houkago DC-bu", which is the title of this chapter.

I assume the DC stands for "Disconnected" which would make their clan name "After-school Offline Club".

Technically DC could also stand for "Dragon's Chrono/Crone", since the author doesn't specify how "Dragon's Krone" is spelled.

That said, if it's suppose to be "Chrono" I'm going to have to flip some tables since "Chrono" isn't a real word like "Krone" (Krone being an alternative spelling of "Crown").



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